Chandigarh; and

(b) the time by which LPG connections are likely to be issued to all the applications?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) About 0.64 lakhs

(b) Efforts are on to give LPG connections to as many applicants as early as possible.

[*Translation*]

Exploration of Oil and Natural Gas In Rajasthan

1154. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the districts in Rajasthan where Seismic survey was conducted to empiore oil and natural gas and when such survey was conducted;

(b) the number of places where drilling work was undertaken and the number of wells in which oil and natural gas has been found;

(c) whether ONGC and OIL have adequate number of rigs which can drill to the maximum depth and if not, whether they propose to arrange more rigs;

(d) whether according to experts there are a number of places in Rajasthan where oil and natural gas can be found;

(e) if so, whether there is proposal to conduct survey in regard to find out such places for the purpose of expioration of oil and natural gas; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) Since 1958, in Jaisalmer, Barmer, Jalore, Bikaner and Ganganagar Districts.

(b) 57 wells have been drilled in Rajasthan, and as on 1.10.91, gas/oil has been discovered in 25 wells.

(c) OIL and ONGC arrange for rigs as per requirement and availability.

(d) to (f) Exploration is still going on in Rajasthan.

[*English*]

Closure of Gold Mines at Kolar

1155. SHRI RAM KAPSE:
SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Bharat Gold Mines Limited has taken any decision to close down the gold mines at Kolar;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of gold mines closed down or proposed to be closed down in the near future;

(d) the anticipated loss, in terms of quantity of gold; and

(e) the number of workers rendered likely to be unemployed as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV): (a) to (d). Due to depletion of gold ore, ultra-deep mining operations, lower grade of gold ore and high costs of production, gold mining at Kolar has become uneconomic and the Company has sustained losses of over Rs. 118.16 crores in the last 5 years.

Government have decided to phase out the uneconomic mining at Mysore, Champion and Nundydroog mines while simultaneously exploring the possiblity of economic mining at shallow levels in Kolar Gold Fields. There